



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher
Dan Wheeler

Volume 42 Issue 4

April 2018

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NALC President Fred Rolando and Rhode Island Congressman David Cicilline look on as NBA John Casciano leads the crowd in a letter carrier cheer at the Region 14 RAP Session. The RAP session was held on March 11 in Providence Rhode Island.

President's Message

"Larry Bird is Not Walking Through That Door Fans..."

On March 1, 2000, amidst a season in which the Celtics were 12 games under 500, Rick Pitino had a now famous press conference where he looked directly into the camera and addressed the fans. He said: "Larry Bird is not walking through that door fans." He then added that Kevin McHale and Robert Parish weren't walking through the door either. Finally he said: "What we are is young, exciting, hard-working, and going to improve." He went on to say that he wished he had \$90 million dollars under the salary cap to buy "everything" but that isn't how it works.

I'm sure you're wondering why I'm writing about an 18 year-old press conference. Well my friends, Vince Sombrotto isn't walking through that door, neither is Bill Young or Fred Rolando for that matter. Celtics fans expected a steady stream of wins, but they didn't want to suffer through the rebuilding period that teams experience. Similarly, some letter carriers want instant gratification when it comes to curing the horrendous workroom floor conditions that prevail in most offices.

Well, I don't know how young or exciting much of the work force is. I do know, however, that you are hard-working and if you accept "coaching" your situation is going to improve. What do I mean by "coaching"? I mean that if you are aggrieved at work, and you call the office or email or text, and you are given advice, follow it. If you are advised to ask for Union time and advised to write a statement so that your steward can file a grievance, do it.

I'll often tell a carrier over the phone that I can't come to your office with a baseball bat and make everything all right. All I, or your steward can do, is make sure that when we talk to you that we make you aware of your rights. All I, or your steward can do, is perhaps tell you what we might do if we were in your situation. We CAN'T tell you WHAT TO DO. Only you can make that decision.

Some of the decisions may be obvious. I would like to think none of us would leave our young children at a bus stop; or cancel an important medical appointment that we scheduled for our day off (even though you don't have to schedule medical appointments on your days off). Some of the decisions are a bit more dicey.

One such decision occurred with a recent storm where over 20 inches of snow fell throughout the vast majority of the branch. There was no state of emergency declared by the governor. Management instructed

carriers to go out and make an effort to deliver, especially parcels. In my opinion, many of the parking lots weren't even safe to walk in, let alone push a hamper through. And the roads, c'mon the roads were treacherous and the treachery was compounded by the poor condition and inferior design of the LLV's. I've already written in a previous Wake-Up! that when the parking lots are poor that it would probably take 4 carriers to safely maneuver a hamper. Driving an LLV in some of the storms that we experience though, that's a call that each individual has to make.

The key is imminent danger. If you are instructed to do something that you feel places you in imminent danger, you do not have to follow the instruction, period. If there is a consequence to your decision, if management issues discipline, then a grievance will be filed. Will we win the grievance? That depends on many factors. Your statement is one such factor. If you write "It wasn't safe to deliver", I can pretty much guarantee a loss. If you write, "I had made management aware of excessive wear on my tires previously and they did not replace the tires. Further, the streets that make up my route still don't allow access to the mailboxes from the previous storm. Finally, the defroster blows cold air so the windshield ices up and the wipers can't clear the snow and vision is greatly impaired," you will have a much better chance to prevail.

The arbitrator is also a wild card. The day of the snowstorm there was an arbitration case scheduled. The letter carrier showed up, the union advocate showed up, the arbitrator showed up, the management advocate did not. Had the management advocate shown up and the case went on as scheduled, I would NEVER want to argue a snowstorm case before the arbitrator that made it to hearing during that blizzard. That would be one major strike against the case. If the arbitrator could make it to his or her job, he or she would naturally think that we should make it to our job.

But, whether you are going to get paid or not shouldn't be the deciding factor when making a decision on whether you're going to refuse to deliver mail and punch out and go home. Your safety should be the most important thing to you. If you made the decision to go home during the last storm, good for you. I hope you got home safe and that your family did as well. Isn't having arrived home safely more important than having annual leave converted to administrative leave? I hope so.

(Continued on page 4)

Executive Vice President's Report

Well it seems as if we had our Spring weather in February and are now getting winter again. At the time I am writing this we are awaiting the 4th storm to arrive within the past 3 weeks. This is usually when everything is melted but at least we have more daylight in order to finish delivery before dark. As usual, don't take any unnecessary chances in order to make deliveries that are possibly hazardous. Hopefully, the snow and ice will melt soon, we are only a couple weeks from baseball opening day.

Congratulations to all the recent retirees from the branch, you will soon get to enjoy your first summer without having to worry if there will be any help for the prime time vacation or if you will be working 6 days a week in the heat and humidity. A high percentage of our carriers are eligible for retirement, or close to it, so it has been good to see some new faces at the branch meetings lately. I know it is difficult to make every branch meeting, but if everyone could make it a few times a year that would be great. Bring another carrier with you. The meetings are usually over in about an hour and if you have any questions, the branch officers would be glad to answer them.

I just want to remind everyone that filling out a 3996 is not an invitation for management to start an argument. The purpose of filling out a 3996 is to inform your supervisor that you are estimating that you won't be able to complete your assignment in 8 hours. Period. Management has the right to approve or disapprove the request, but there is nothing in the manuals that states that you must then engage in some sort of negotiation about the time requested. The reason why you need OT or auxiliary assistance should be on the 3996, along with a reasonable estimate of how much time you need. If management disapproves the request you simply need to ask them if they want you to finish the assignment. No argument necessary, and always ask for a copy of your 3996. If you are told to curtail mail, then you should fill out a form 1571 indicating so and request a copy of that also. Too many times I see carriers and their supervisors arguing on the floor over DOIS projections and it simply isn't worth it. Those projections are a tool for management that could be either accurate or inaccurate on any given day. Management will generally not tell you when the projections are for more than an 8 hour day, but when they say less than 8, usually we hear about it. Don't take their bait by engaging in an argument.

Recently, some carriers have been instructed to scan parcels when they are loading their LLVs for the street. I am not sure if it is in all of our stations. These scans tell the carrier what shelf to place the parcel on in the rear of

the vehicle. This is meant to help unfamiliar carriers when loading the vehicle, and in turn make it easier to separate sections of their route for delivery. For this purpose it makes sense. I know this may not help a seasoned carrier load his/her vehicle but if instructed, we should comply even if it doesn't make sense to the way you would load your vehicle. If this process takes more time to load then so be it, it will be documented in the scans. We don't know how long this will last or if it is just another experiment.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

April 1	Easter April Fools Day
April 3	8PM Branch Meeting @ Knights of Columbus 27 School St. Ext. Wilmington Food served @ 7:15
April 12	Holocaust Remembrance Day
April 13	Friday the 13th
April 15	Branch 25 Pancake Breakfast
April 16	Patriots Day
April 17	Tax Day
April 19	National High Five Day
April 22	Earth Day
April 27	Arbor Day

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

David J. Barbuzzi	President
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Richard Donlon	Asst Health Benefits Rep
Ron Noviello	Workers' Comp Rep.

Your "Wake-Up!" is produced in-house at the Branch 25 Union office each and every month.

What Mass Vets Need To Know

The Veterans Administration and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts offer a number of benefits to Veterans and surviving spouses. This document is *not* a complete list of all benefits you may be eligible for or entitled to. By law, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires every city and town to have a Veteran Service Officer (VSO) to assist Veterans in obtaining federal and state benefits. *Please do not try to do this on your own!*

Your local VSO is a Veteran and is your primary contact to assist you in answering questions and helping you with the necessary paperwork. Work collaboratively with them! To locate the name and contact information of your local VSO, go to www.massvetsadvisor.org. This website offers a great deal of information about Veterans benefits.

Massachusetts Veterans, in general, are eligible for the following benefits:

- Welcome Home bonus
- Free tuition in all state community colleges, colleges, and universities
- Have the word 'Veteran' printed on their driver's license
- Under Chapter 115 of Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L. Ch. 115), the Commonwealth provides a uniform program of financial and medical assistance for indigent Veterans and their dependents. Qualifying Veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter,

What Mass Vets Need To Know

clothing, housing supplies, and medical care in accordance with a formula, which takes into account the number of dependents and income from all sources. Eligible dependents of deceased Veterans are provided with the same benefits as they would were the veteran still living.

- May be eligible for long-term care at the Soldiers Homes in Chelsea and Holyoke
- Burial in the state Veterans' cemeteries in Agawam or Winchendon or the Bourne National Cemetery and obtain grave markers
- Veterans License Plates
- Certain disabled Veterans and former POWs are eligible for a waiver of fees for motor vehicle registration and sales tax
- Free medical care by the VA for one year immediately upon discharge
- Participate in the VA Loan Guarantee Program to purchase or refinance a home

Ultimately, you are responsible for helping yourself and need to play an active role in obtaining benefits. The following tips are based on past experiences of VSOs and other Veterans that will serve you well!

Semper Fi,
Andie Coulter
Veteran's Representative

President's Message (continued)

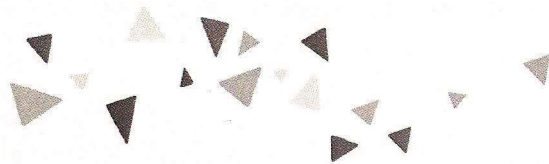
The snowstorm is only one example. If you have a bullying supervisor, do you really think that words from the Union office will set them straight? YOU have to help us. You have to take our coaching and write the statements and bear witness for others and file the grievances. Rick Pitino wished he had \$90 million under the cap. I wish I had the authority to clean house on the management side. Neither of us got our wish. He had to try to do it through hard work. I'm asking you to be the team and achieve your goals of dignity and respect through hard work. You give us the statements, we'll file the grievances. That's how it works. The statements aren't angry phone calls or text messages or emails. The statements are signed, dated, written statements detailing the violation. I can't do it for you, but I CAN do it with you.

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

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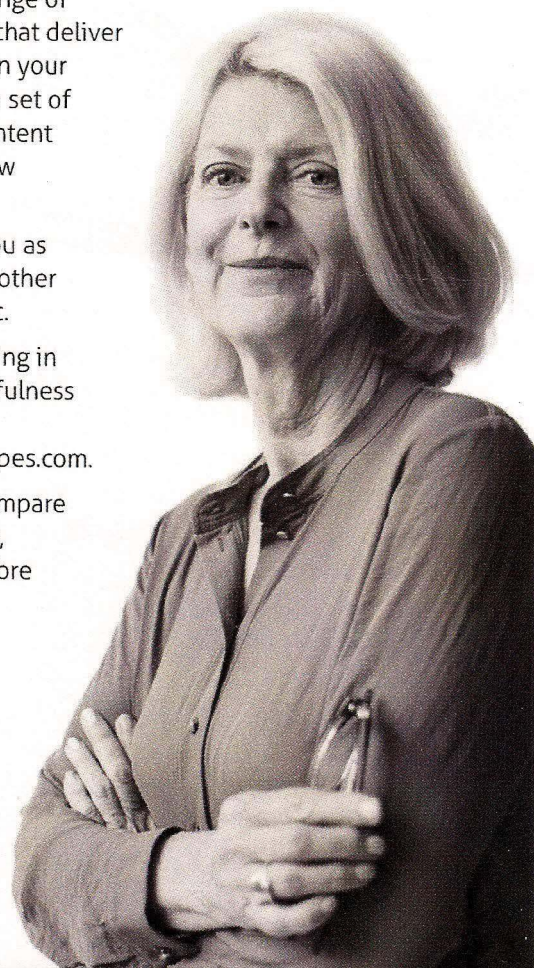
- ☑ While the online world can be a tempting pastime, ask yourself if maddening posts or stories have meaning in your life—probably not!
- ☑ If current events make you anxious, sad or negative, try not to transfer these emotions to those around you.
- ☑ Others may push their advice, ideas or agendas, but don't let them define you. Instead, follow your internal value system and common sense. *Make up your own mind.*

Think before you believe

In these confusing times of so-called “fake news” it can be hard to decide what is truthful and what is knowingly misleading. While all of the troublesome information on social and broadcast media can feel crushing, you can learn to manage it.

Most journalists practice their craft with integrity and respect for the truth. However, some agenda-driven domestic and foreign sources produce “news” only with creating discord and profit in mind. Here are some ways to protect yourself from false messaging.

- Seek information from a wide range of sources. Skip social media sites that deliver information to you based only on your online profile via algorithms or a set of rules. Remember this type of content represents an increasingly narrow range of views and ideas.
- If a news story's intent strikes you as doubtful or one-sided, examine other sources of reporting on the topic.
- If you question whether something in the news is valid, check its truthfulness on sites such as FactCheck.org, MediaBiasFactCheck.com or Snopes.com.
- Don't share without thinking. Compare the validity of stories and voices, and frame your own opinion before sharing online.



“Avoid the crowd, avoid mass audiences, keep your own counsel, which is the counsel of philosophy—of wisdom you can acquire and make your own.”

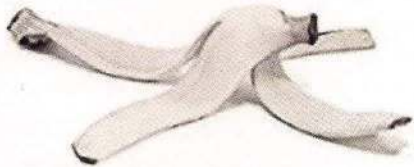
– Zygmunt Bauman

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A User's Guide to Our
Injury-Prone Minds



Steve Casner

I recently checked this book out from the library. The author is a NASA scientist and research psychologist who studies the accident-prone mind. He also flies jets and helicopters, and rides motorcycles! The purpose of the book is to study why the rate of unintentional injury deaths has risen since 2000 (see graph). Casner believes that there are enough safe guards and information available in today's world. He also knows that with more technological advances comes more distractions. He thinks the next step is in our own minds. "When the idea to be more careful comes from within our own heads, we don't need to be reminded or convinced"; it sounds like NASA gets safety talks everyday too!

The hard part is figuring out how our minds work and knowing where the "potholes of life" are. So, if you can, pick up a copy of the book, and I thought over the next few articles and monthly meetings I would reference some of the stories and different vulnerabilities that people face and how to deal with them. One vulnerability is making errors. We all make errors. We must admit we make them and move on. Which brings me to this month's trivia which deals with sports for something different.

This story is from the book and involves an error made by a defensive end from the Minnesota Vikings in 1964. Even though he was a great player, he picked up a loose ball and ran it into his own end zone! What is the player's name and what were the defense of the Vikings known as?

Stay safe,
Jim Salvati

A: Jim Marshall / Purple People Eaters



Retiree Rich Donlon and Peabody letter carriers Andy Coan and Bob Cronin listen as City Delivery staff member Patty Joseph spoke about intentional false editing of clock rings by management. If any carrier suspects something missing from their pay please contact the Branch 25 office immediately!

President Rolando spoke about the proposed Trump budget and the devastating effects on letter carriers. The proposed budget would eliminate the COLA for FERS employees and reduce the COLA for CSRS employees. It would also eliminate the supplement for those who retire before they are eligible for social security at age 62. It would change the high-3 to high-5 for computing the annuity amount and slash the rate of the G Fund in the Thrift Savings Plan. President Rolando stressed the importance of supporting those in congress who support our issues.

President Rolando also updated members on some current issues. Article 12 withholding is almost completely done. As of the RAP Session there were only two withheld positions left, down from management's original estimate of 950. The current LLV maintenance budget is 1 billion dollars annually! The new vehicles are currently being tested around the country and Director of City Delivery, Chris Jackson has been working closely with the Postal Service on this.

Congressman David Cicilline [D-RI] addressed the attendees about what was happening in Congress to fight the attempted cuts on the Postal Service. Currently there are three bills introduced in the House of Representatives addressing important issues for letter carriers. H.Res.15 would maintain Saturday delivery. H.Res.28 would maintain door-to-door delivery and H.Res. 31 relates to delivery standards. These bills have the support of both House Democrats and Republicans.

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WAKE UP

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